

## 1 Samuel 23 - Thursday, July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2014

- Last week we left David, who had left his mother and father in Moab, then left Moab heeding the prophet Gad and going back into Judah.
- David is honoring his mother and father, heeding the prophets warning, and he's back on track in his seeking of and walking with the Lord.
- I suppose you could say that Israel's national hero is back. It's the David who slew Goliath and the tens of thousands we'll see once again.

(1) Then they told David, saying, "Look, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah, and they are robbing the threshing floors."

- Couples of thoughts here right out of the shoot, chief of which are the questions that come up as to why it is that David is the one to do this.
- Here's why, Saul as King is the one who should be fighting against Keilah, which was in Judah in order to deliver Israel from the Philistines.
- However, Saul has no regard, nor does he have any concern for the Israelites because he's demonically consumed with murdering David.

- Another question this raises is concerning why they come to David instead of Saul, who's responsibility it was to protect Israel's livelihood.

- This because, the Philistines waited until the Israelites were threshing their grain at the harvest, then steal what amounts to a year's wages.
- I point this out because of how decimating this was for them, especially after they had worked so hard during the year, only to have it taken.

- Another question that comes up is why David, as we'll see next, steps up to the plate as it were and does that which the King refuses to do.

- The reason being is this would've not only endangered David putting him close in proximity to Saul, it would provoke more wrath from Saul.
- Once again, David would shame Saul as he did when he slew Goliath and tens of thousands, which made him more of a king than the king.

- Here's where I'm going with all of this, just here in this first verse, I would suggest that there are no less than three take-away truth's in this.

- You may be able to find more, but perhaps you'll indulge me for just a few moments as I share the ones the Lord has ministered to me in.
- I say that to say this, often times God will minister and speak through His Word into our lives in very different ways from the same scripture.

1) God takes notice of, and is even protective of our provisions and sustenance knowing we have need of His providing and protecting them.

- I think of how Jesus would feed the multitudes physical food first providing them with that need before ministering to them the spiritual food.
- If one doubts the seriousness with which God is protective with the providing for and the feeding of His people Matthew 6:25-34 removes it.

Matthew 6:25-34 NIV (25) "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? (26) Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? (27) Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? (28) "And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. (29) Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. (30) If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? (31) So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' (32) For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. (33) But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. (34) Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

2) Deliverance of God's people from the enemy will come from another when those whom God has called refuse to do what God commands.

- Clearly Saul is off the rails so-to-speak and as such, he cannot be relied upon to do that which God had both called and anointed him to do.
- The take away here is two-fold, first, it speaks to how we like Saul won't heed God's call if we're consumed by and we're focused on self.

- The second take away is that it speaks to how we like David may be the one whom God calls when the Saul in our life refuses God's call.

- Perhaps better said, God will choose to use the least and last, such that He trust us with that which alone brings God not man, all the glory.
- I think of Esther, who like David, God would choose to use as the least and last to deliver God's people after heeding Mordecai's warning.

Esther 4:13-14 NKJV And Mordecai told *them* to answer Esther: "Do not think in your heart that you will escape in the king's palace any more than all the other Jews. (14) For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for *such* a time as this?"

3) God is always pleased with and rewarding of our willingness to step out in faith especially if it's against all odds in the realm of the natural.

- I can't get over how outnumbered David is with having only 400 men, all of whom would be no match militarily against Israel's trained army.
- If this weren't bad enough, David's 400 men, who as we'll see next, are reluctant to go on what they've perceived to be a suicide mission.

Hebrews 11:6 NIV And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

(2) Therefore David inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall I go and attack these Philistines?" And the LORD said to David, "Go and attack the Philistines, and save Keilah." (3) But David's men said to him, "Look, we are afraid here in Judah. How much more then if we go to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines?" (4) Then David inquired of the LORD once again. And the LORD answered him and said, "Arise, go down to Keilah. For I will deliver the Philistines into your hand."

- I told you our hero was back! What David does is nothing short of astounding on two fronts his seeking of God and leading of God's people.
- More specifically, David first and foremost inquired of the Lord then, secondly, he humbly took into consideration his followers reservations.
- This is the mark of a true godly leader in that they don't demand those under their leadership fall in line, rather; they'll consider their input.

- I believe as with any leader who does this David earned the trust of those under his leadership because of his willingness to hear them out.

- I'll take it a step further and suggest David going back to inquire of the Lord concerning their reservations endeared them to him even more.
- To me, this speaks to David's humility, wisdom and courage. He humbly considers others, wisely seeks God, and courageously trusts God.

Charles Spurgeon - "Here we see the deep religiousness of David: he would do nothing till he had waited upon God. O for more of this holy caution. ...Brave as [David's men] were, they judged this to be a rash enterprise, for they would have two enemies to fear – the Philistines and the soldiers of Saul. David listened to his men courteously, but he was not ruled by them. He turned to his God again for direction."

- Before we move on to verse five there's another important truth that's woven into the fabric of verses two through four we'd do well to note.
- Namely, that of seeking confirmation from the Lord, for that which you believe is of the Lord before setting your foot to it in and for the Lord.
- Actually, this is a template of sorts with which to superimpose upon that which we're seeking to know and confirm is indeed the Lord's will.

- Let me explain by way of an illustration of the four legs that hold up a table. So too are there four legs that hold up the table of God's will.

- The first leg is God's Word, the second is God's peace, the third leg is God's providence, and the fourth is God's confirmation via counsel.

- In other words, it has to be Biblical, peaceable, providential, then confirmed vis-à-vis the multitude of godly counsel from godly believers.

- If you really think about it, not only did David have all four of these, his confirmation would come from God packaged with a promise as well.

- It's interesting, instead of David belittling his men for their fear, he modeled for his men his faith, and in so doing he received this promise.

- Moreover, the promise was more so pronounced in the confirmation then it was when God first says attack the Philistines and save Keilah.

(5) And David and his men went to Keilah and fought with the Philistines, struck them with a mighty blow, and took away their livestock. So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah. (6) Now it happened, when Abiathar the son of Ahimelech fled to David at Keilah, *that* he went down with an ephod in his hand. (7) And Saul was told that David had gone to Keilah. So Saul said, "God has delivered him into my hand, for he has shut himself in by entering a town that has gates and bars." (8) Then Saul called all the people together for war, to go down to Keilah to besiege David and his men. (9) When David knew that Saul plotted evil against him, he said to Abiathar the priest, "Bring the ephod here."

(10) Then David said, "O LORD God of Israel, Your servant has certainly heard that Saul seeks to come to Keilah to destroy the city for my sake. (11) Will the men of Keilah deliver me into his hand? Will Saul come down, as Your servant has heard? O LORD God of Israel, I pray, tell Your servant." And the LORD said, "He will come down." (12) Then David said, "Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul?" And the LORD said, "They will deliver *you*." (13) So David and his men, about six hundred, arose and departed from Keilah and went wherever they could go. Then it was told Saul that David had escaped from Keilah; so he halted the expedition.

- If you're anything like me, you're probably wondering how it's possible that these men of Keilah could do this after David had saved them.

- You're probably also wondering how hurtful this must have been to David, not to mention his men, who we're told are about six hundred.

- This would seem to indicate that somewhere along the line, 200 more men joined with the 400 and followed David in departing from Keilah.

- Be that as it may, there are lessons we can learn from all this as it relates to both, what David does, as well as from what David doesn't do.

- First, from what David does do, we can learn the lesson of praying continually and specifically in seeking the Lord as we turn each corner.

- It's rather striking that David continues to seek specific answers from the Lord and as he does the Lord answers him accordingly each time.

One commentator of this said, "Here is a second inquiry. God loveth to be often sought unto by his praying people (Luke 18:1), and the therefore answereth them by degrees, that he may frequently hear from them."

- It's this second lesson as it relates to what David does not do that is most remarkable such that he holds no ill will at the time nor yet future.

- By that I mean David could retaliate in revenge if he stayed and fought upon Saul's arrival to Keilah, and the betrayal by the men of Keilah.

- Instead David heeds God's Word, and once again escapes from Keilah and even when he becomes their king does nothing against Keilah.

- Here again we have a powerful leadership principle that's demonstrated by what David does not do such that he doesn't repay the betrayal.

- Were he to succumb in vengeance to repaying the betrayal it's doubtful that David's life would have been as blessed for as long as it was.

- Herein lies the principle, it's doubtful that any of us will taste from the cup of God's blessing in our service to Him absent having a thick skin.

- This sort of begs the question of why David didn't retaliate when he arguably had every right to after what he had done for them in Keilah.

- I would suggest there are at least two reasons for this, the first of which is that David was doing it as unto the Lord instead of as unto man.

- Were David to do this for man rather than God, he would've been devastated by virtue of his expecting them to reward him instead of God.

- The second reason he didn't retaliate is David was keenly aware of the peril not betraying him would've wrought especially after Ahimelech.

- In other words, David knew what they knew, which was the utter destruction that Saul would bring upon them if they were not to betray him.

- To David's credit, the grief of what Saul did to the city of Priests because of him, had taught David a valuable lesson he would never forget.

Charles Spurgeon in this regard so aptly said it this way, "Observe David's anxiety for the city rather than for himself. Saul had destroyed Nob for sheltering him, and he might do the same to Keilah. Generous spirits cannot bear to bring evil upon others."

(14) And David stayed in strongholds in the wilderness, and remained in the mountains in the Wilderness of Ziph. Saul sought him every day, but God did not deliver him into his hand. (15) So David saw that Saul had come out to seek his life. And David *was* in the Wilderness of Ziph in a forest. (16) Then Jonathan, Saul's son, arose and went to David in the woods and strengthened his hand in God. (17) And he said to him, "Do not fear, for the hand of Saul my father shall not find you. You shall be king over Israel, and I shall be next to you. Even my father Saul knows that." (18) So the two of them made a covenant before the LORD. And David stayed in the woods, and Jonathan went to his own house.

- I see this as being very bitter sweet. Sweet because the last time David and Jonathan assumed they would never see each other again.

- This may explain why they renewed the covenant they had made the last time. However, it's bitter because this ends up being the last time.

- Sadly, Jonathan will never be David's "second," by his side as he tells David he will in his efforts to encourage and strengthen him in God.

- This is interesting in and of itself in the sense that Jonathan was not strengthening David's hand in weaponry or strategy, but in the Lord.
- It's important to note the wilderness of Ziph was a very rugged and difficult place to be due to its topographical mountainous landscape.
- The reason I mention this is because often times God may deem fit we remain in our mountains in the Wilderness of our Ziph for a season.
- Thankfully, God is always faithful to send our Jonathan while in that wilderness to provide us a much needed encouragement and strength.
- Like with the cave of Adullam being that much needed refuge, so too is the Wilderness of Ziph that much needed strengthened in the Lord.
- I like how one commentator said it, "David became a man after God's heart in the shepherd's field but he became a king in the wilderness."
- By the way, Ziph means "refining," which makes the Wilderness of Ziph the wilderness of refining, and such was the case with David then.
- So too is it the case with us by virtue of how God chooses the Wilderness of Ziph to refine us as He prepares us for what's prepared for us.
- The problem with this is, we don't like to be refined in this way, when the fact of the matter is that it's the only way God can accomplish this.

**Isaiah 48:10 NKJV** Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction.

(19) Then the Ziphites came up to Saul at Gibeah, saying, "Is David not hiding with us in strongholds in the woods, in the hill of Hachilah, which *is* on the south of Jeshimon? (20) Now therefore, O king, come down according to all the desire of your soul to come down; and our part *shall be* to deliver him into the king's hand." (21) And Saul said, "Blessed *are* you of the LORD, for you have compassion on me. (22) Please go and find out for sure, and see the place where his hideout is, *and* who has seen him there. For I am told he is very crafty. (23) See therefore, and take knowledge of all the lurking places where he hides; and come back to me with certainty, and I will go with you. And it shall be, if he is in the land, that I will search for him throughout all the clans of Judah."

- Couple of thoughts here concerning a delusional demon possessed Saul who's so self-deceived he actually believes God is blessing him.
- This is textbook behavior for any man who in his stiff-necked arrogance and obstinance fancy's himself walking in perceived righteousness.
- It's evidenced by Saul accusing an innocent David of being very crafty, an accusation that could only be rightfully levied upon Saul himself.

Charles Spurgeon in speaking to Saul being delusional writes, "Saul had come to regard himself as the injured party and he dared to introduce God's name into his hypocritical speech; thus showing that he had lost all moral sense, and was under a strong delusion to believe a lie. By a course of sin a bad man may at last convince himself that he is right, and even fancy that God himself is in league with him. The Lord save us from so terrible a state of mind."

- So terrible and delusional is Saul's state of mind that he actually believes that the reason David has escaped here-to-fore is that he's crafty.
- The truth of the matter is, David escaped not because his craftiness, David has escaped because of his God, here-to-fore, delivering him.
- The reason I point this out is because Saul is so unhinged that his reason and logic have fled from him, as fast as David has fled from him.

**Psalms 54:1-7 NKJV To the Chief Musician. With Stringed Instruments. A Contemplation of David When the Ziphites Went and Said to Saul, "Is David Not Hiding with Us?"** Save me, O God, by Your name, And vindicate me by Your strength. (2) Hear my prayer, O God; Give ear to the words of my mouth. (3) For strangers have risen up against me, And oppressors have sought after my life; They have not set God before them. Selah (4) Behold, God *is* my helper; The Lord *is* with those who uphold my life. (5) He will repay my enemies for their evil. Cut them off in Your truth. (6) I will freely sacrifice to You; I will praise Your name, O LORD, for *it is* good. (7) For He has delivered me out of all trouble; And my eye has seen *its desire* upon my enemies.

Alan Redpath writes in his commentary on David's Psalm says, "David is now looking at God. First he was looking at his enemies and these supposed friends of his, but now he sees them through God. If you begin with God, your enemies grow small. If you begin with the enemy, you may never reach God."

(24) So they arose and went to Ziph before Saul. But David and his men *were* in the Wilderness of Maon, in the plain on the south of Jeshimon. (25) When Saul and his men went to seek *him*, they told David. Therefore he went down to the rock, and stayed in the Wilderness of Maon. And when Saul heard *that*, he pursued David in the Wilderness of Maon. (26) Then Saul went on one side of the mountain, and David and his men on the other side of the mountain. So David made haste to get away from Saul, for Saul and his men were encircling David and his men to take them. (27) But a messenger came to Saul, saying, "Hurry and come, for the Philistines have invaded the land!" (28) Therefore Saul returned from pursuing David, and went against the Philistines; so they called that place the Rock of Escape. (29) Then David went up from there and dwelt in strongholds at En Gedi.

- I can't think of a better way to end the chapter than with God miraculously intervening on David's behalf at what looks like the last second.
- By any stretch of the imagination, Saul, who was so close in proximity to David, should have been able to capture and kill David very easily.
- But God!!! But God thwarts David's enemy from doing that which God would not allow him to do, this because of God's anointing on David.

- Allow me to close by sharing what the Lord has ministered to me concerning the aforementioned Cave of Adullam, and Wilderness of Ziph.

- In addition to this cave and wilderness, we now have the "Rock of Escape." I'm relatively certain you know where I'm going with all of this.

- Notice how that the cave represents refuge, the wilderness represents refining, and the rock represents escape and they're all in that order.

- Here's what I'm thinking, first we come to the Savior in the cave of refuge when we're saved; as such the cave of refuge is for our salvation.
- Then secondly, we are refined by the Savior in the Wilderness of Ziph after we're saved; as such the wilderness of refining is sanctification.
- Then thirdly, we will escape with the Savior as the Rock of Escape because we're saved; as such the Rock of Escape is relocation/rapture.